

Collaborative firms, networks and social media: implications for management research and practice

In the era of knowledge economy, the digital transformation has changed the way to run and grow a business. A collaborative approach is evoked and implemented by new, advanced technologies (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). This has resulted in a greater number of firms operating in a digital scenario (Palacios-Marques *et al.*, 2015a, 2015b). More than 86 per cent of firms declared the relevance of social networking sites (SNSs) for improving their business performance (Scuotto *et al.*, 2017a, 2017b; Stelzner, 2013). Besides, these sites are inducing the adoption of a virtual, collaborative approach (McAfee, 2006; Davenport, 2013; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). They have already been studied in the form of marketing tools (Berinato, 2010) to improve marketing communication effectiveness (Dholakia and Durham, 2010; Kozinets *et al.*, 2010; Trusov *et al.*, 2009; Decarolis and Deeds, 1999; McEvily and Chakravarthy, 2002; Levy, 2009; Pechlaner and Bachinger, 2010) and firms' innovation performance (Scuotto *et al.*, 2017a, 2017b; Palacios-Marques *et al.*, 2015a, 2015b), but nobody has already addressed studies on these tools embracing a managerial prospective.

Given that, the present special issue seeks to enrich the current literature review, providing a series of studies on the effect of the use of new technologies on management and innovation process. It offers a wide overview on the embracement of a collaborative approach by using SNSs, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digital moviemakers. Especially, submitted papers consisted of theoretical and applied research in topics including social media and firm performance, impact of digital innovation on corporate operation and relation between the usage of social networks to promote, develop innovative ideas and improve management processes. Therefore, this special issue presents original research findings from different countries such as Italy, Hong Kong, Indonesia and from a wide range of industries (e.g. high tech, knowledge intensive and creative and culture). Those findings emerged from different methodologies: from a quantitative method such as a survey to a qualitative one such as an exploratory case study. By going over a double-blind peer review, all articles were selected as excellent, novel contributions to the innovation and managerial literature review, and therefore readers of this special issue should be technically savvy, scientifically demanding, and drawn to practically relevant phenomena.

In particular, this volume opens with a literature review paper by Federica Pascucci, Chiara Ancillai and Silvio Cardinali entitled "Exploring antecedents of social media usage in B2B: a systematic review." This paper aims to review the state-of-the-art literature on social media adoption in business-to-business (B2B) contexts to propose an inclusive and theoretical viewpoint to understand the antecedents of this phenomenon. Through a systematic literature review on 29 studies published in academic journals, books and conference papers, in the field of marketing and management from 2001 to 2017, the authors show an increasing number of studies on the topic of social media usage in the B2B context in the last five years.

A different overview on social media is offered by Elisa Arrigo. The author suggests a study entitled "Social media marketing in luxury brands: A systematic literature review and implications for management research." She explores social media articles in the field of luxury brands via a systematic literature review from 2010 to 2016. As emerged, four research themes are primarily argued:



- (1) Influence of social media marketing on luxury brand equity;
- (2) Marketing potential of social media on customer engagement and retention;
- (3) Luxury brands – customer touchpoints on social media; and
- (4) Social media opportunities for innovation and co-creation.

Again, on the use of the social media (named as social networks), Aluisius H. Pratono proposes a research entitled “From social networks to firm performance: The mediating effect of trust, selling capability, and pricing capability.” The scope is to explain the complex relationship between social network and firm performance mediating by trust, selling capability and pricing capability. These measures are assessed by a structural equation model carried on a sample of 380 small and medium enterprises in Indonesia. As a result, the use of social media in management process will not have effect on increasing firm performance unless the firms build trust upon social networks. Besides, trust allows firms to gain pricing and selling capabilities, which bring a positive impact on firm performance.

Additionally to research on these digital platforms, a study on ICTs is presented by Gabriele Santoro and Antonio Usai. The paper entitled “Knowledge exploration and ICT knowledge exploitation through human resource management: a study of Italian firms” offers a valuable study on ICT knowledge exploitation. The study investigates the relationships among human resource management (HRM), ICT, knowledge exploitation and exploration on a sample of 129 Italian firms via ordinary least squares. Their results confirm a direct and significant effect of HRM practices on knowledge exploration and a moderation effect of ICT knowledge exploitation on the relationship between HRM practices and knowledge exploration.

Knowledge is also considered to enhance innovation via merger and acquisition mode as discussed by Alberto Ferraris, Luca Dezi, Enrico Battisti and Armando Papa. “The link between mergers and acquisitions and innovation: a systematic literature review” is the study offered. The authors provide an extensive analysis on 55 academic papers, published from 2010 to 2017, showing existing prospective on merger and acquisition modes and innovation, the literature gap and novel research.

The research perspective completely changes with the article proposed by Jimmy Chan, Anthony Ko, Alan Au and Matthew Yeung. They conduct a research on the film industry by adopting a quantitative approach. Especially, their research entitled “A relational perspective on pure project performance: network centrality and cinematic achievements in the Hong Kong film industry” investigates the Hong Kong film industry’s empirically testing whether leaders’ centrality explains the commercial and artistic of movie projects effects. Although the centrality of the degree contributes to both commercial and artistic performance and industry veterans are more likely to possess this centrality, their results indicate that the new directors will face the challenge of competing against veterans for human resources and star recruitment, thanks to the use of social media.

Overall, social media networks, ICTs and moviemakers emerged to be useful tools for socialization, communication and knowledge management for contemporary firms: they increase bidirectional relationships among firm and stakeholders (clients, suppliers, competitors) (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). The management moves on network-centric organization from ego-centric organization embedded in the virtual market (Nambisan and Sawhney, 2008; Adler and Heckscher, 2006). It develops a new managerial philosophy that relates to the following aspects:

- adoption of an open mind approach in every managerial process;
- technologies and collaborative processes for management;

- utilization of platforms and virtual community to develop new management tools/processes/products;
- connection of the corporate strategy with the organizational model of the business networks; and
- development of new knowledge sharing and management tools for open innovation (Dyer, 2000; Cook, 2008).

Hence, firms produce, develop and distribute goods and services using talents qualified for the innovation generation in peer production coming from open source principle (Tapscott, Williams, 2007).

Finally, the last but not least article, the Editorial team would like to thank all peer-to-peer reviewers who gave a great contribution to this special issue with their invaluable comments. We are grateful for their support. A special acknowledgement goes, of course, to Prof Lerong and to Prof Janney, Co-Editors in Chief of the *Management Research Review*, for their insightful suggestions and patient guidance: this issue would never see the light without their precious advices, support and if they had not thrilled for the research topics I proposed.

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